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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/50/635/Add.2)]

50/185. Strengthening the role of the United Nations in enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections and the promotion of democratization

The General Assembly,

Recalling its previous resolutions on the subject, especially resolutions 48/131 of 20 December 1993 and 49/190 of 23 December 1994,

Recalling also the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993, 1/ especially the recognition therein that assistance provided upon the request of Governments for the conduct of free and fair elections, including assistance in the human rights aspects of elections and public information about elections, is of particular importance in the strengthening and building of institutions relating to human rights and the strengthening of a pluralistic civil society, and that special emphasis should be given to measures that assist in achieving those goals, 2/

Reaffirming that electoral assistance and support for the promotion of democratization are provided only at the specific request of the Member State concerned,

Recognizing the usefulness of a comprehensive and balanced approach in the activities carried out by the United Nations in this field in order to

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1/ A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

2/ Ibid., sect. II, para. 67.

contribute to the strengthening of both democracy and human rights within the country concerned,

Welcoming the support provided by States to the electoral assistance activities of the United Nations, inter alia, through the provision of experts and electoral observers, as well as through contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for Electoral Observation,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections, 3/

Noting the continuing high level and evolving nature of requests for electoral assistance by Member States,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on United Nations activities aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections; 3/

2. Commends the electoral assistance provided to Member States at their request by the United Nations, requests that such assistance continue on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the guidelines on electoral assistance, recognizing that the fundamental responsibility of organizing free and fair elections lies with Governments, and also requests the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat to continue to inform Member States on a regular basis about the requests received, responses given to those requests and the nature of the assistance provided;

3. Requests that the United Nations continue its efforts to ensure, before undertaking to provide electoral assistance to a requesting State, that there is adequate time to organize and carry out an effective mission for providing such assistance, that conditions exist to allow a free and fair election and that provisions can be made for adequate and comprehensive reporting of the results of the mission;

4. Commends the steps taken by the United Nations to ensure the continuation and consolidation of the democratization process in certain Member States requesting assistance, including the provision of assistance before and after elections have taken place and needs-assessment missions aimed at recommending programmes which might contribute to the consolidating of the democratization process, and requests that such efforts be strengthened;

5. Recommends that the Electoral Assistance Division provide post-election assistance, as appropriate, to requesting States and electoral institutions, in order to contribute to the stability and continuity of their electoral processes, as provided for in the report of the Secretary-General, and that it study, in cooperation with relevant United Nations offices, ways of defining more clearly the activities related to democratic consolidation which the United Nations might usefully undertake in assisting the efforts of interested States in this regard;

3/ A/50/736.

6. Requests the Secretary-General to take further steps to support States which request assistance by, inter alia, enabling the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in accordance with his mandate and through the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat, to support democratization activities related to human rights concerns, including human rights training and education, assistance for human rights-related legislative reform, strengthening and reform of the judiciary, assistance to national human rights institutions and advisory services on treaty accession, reporting and international obligations as related to human rights;

7. Commends the programmes of assistance carried out by the United Nations Development Programme for civil service reform and for governance, especially those for strengthening participation and linkages between concerned sectors of society and Governments;

8. Recalls the establishment by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Trust Fund for Electoral Observation, and calls upon Member States to consider contributing to the Fund;

9. Stresses the importance of coordination within the United Nations system, including cooperation with the Centre for Human Rights, the Department for Development Support and Management Services of the Secretariat and the United Nations Development Programme, which provide advisory services and technical assistance to requesting Member States, and encourages the Electoral Assistance Division to strengthen its collaboration with the Centre, including through an exchange of personnel when appropriate, and with the Department and the Programme and to continue to inform them of requests submitted in the area of electoral assistance;

10. Notes with appreciation additional efforts being made to enhance cooperation with other international, governmental and non-governmental organizations in order to facilitate more comprehensive and need-specific responses to requests for electoral assistance;

11. Requests the Secretary-General to provide the Electoral Assistance Division with adequate human and financial resources, under the regular budget of the Organization and within existing resources, to allow it to carry out its mandate, and to continue to ensure that the Centre for Human Rights is able to respond, within its mandate and in close coordination with the Electoral Assistance Division, to the increasing number of requests from Member States for advisory services;

12. Notes the evolution in the nature of requests for assistance and the growing need for specific types of expert assistance aimed at supporting and strengthening the existing capability of the requesting Government, in particular through enhancing the capacity of electoral institutions;

13. Recommends that the Secretary-General consider ways to continue to improve coordination and to strengthen further the efforts of the Electoral Assistance Division, the Centre for Human Rights and the United Nations system in general to respond to its increased and evolving responsibilities and enlarged mandate in the field of electoral assistance and democratization as reflected in the present resolution, and to include his recommendations in this regard in his report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session;

14. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session on the implementation of resolution 49/190 and the present resolution, in particular on the status of requests from Member States for electoral assistance and verification, and on his efforts to enhance the Organization's support of the democratization process in Member States.

99th plenary meeting
22 December 1995